STUDY
COMMISSION
REPORTS

File #96

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL STUDY COMMISSION ON RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Adopted on April 1, 1976

As a result of Legislative budget discussions, the 1975 General Assembly authorized, pursuant to Section 59 of Chapter 875g 1975 Session Laws of North Carolina, a Special Study Commission "to make a detailed examination of the programs of research, development, evaluation and assessment with the Department of Public Instruction and do such other studies as the Commission might determine to be pertinent in evaluating these programs and whether they should be transferred, in whole or in part, expanded or decreased."

In its attempt to comply with the charge set forth in Section 59 the Commission conducted a series of hearings during which presentations were made by the staff of the Division of Research and Development, Department of Public Instruction, hereinafter referred to as R & D, the Deans of Education of North Carolina State University, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Duke University, and a retired Dean of East Carolina University. Other presentations were made by superintendents, principals, supervisors, teachers, and statistical personnel from the Research Triangle Institute. Presenters shared views and descriptive information regarding purposes, methods of operation, and results of R & D in the public schools of North Carolina. Each presenter responded to questioning by members of the

Commission. The R & D staff of the Department of Public Instruction appeared before the Commission a second time and responded to extensive questioning regarding the role, function and results achieved by the Division of R & D.

In order to place the information collected in proper perspective and to make valid judgments and recommendations concerning the operations and effectiveness of R & D in the public schools of North Carolina, the Commission found it necessary to have first, a general understanding of the relationship between the Department of Public Instruction and local school administrative units, and second, a knowledge of R & D's impact on student and teacher performance across North Carolina. Throughout its study the Commission attempted to fully examine statutory constraints and mandates, local and state control of educational programs and practice, determination of educational goals and performance standards as they apply to public education in general and R & D in particular.

The Commission's study led to the following findings of fact:

(1) The 147 local school administrative units of North Carolina operate, in conformity with state statutes and established custom, as local autonomous units. Each local board of education has primary control over the setting of its own educational goals, standards of excellence in instruction, and procedures of evaluation.

(2) The Department of Public Instruction functions primarily as a service arm of public education, with virtually no regulatory control over local unit operations, except in fiscal matters.

(3) There is evidence of need for statewide understanding of the role and services of the State Department of Public Instruction and its subdivisions.

(4) Historically, financial support of R & D in North Carolina public education has been extremely limited with the primary source being federal funds. Since the establishment of a Division of Research and Development in 1969, the Department of Public Instruction has provided the only (and very limited) organized R & D services to the public schools of North Carolina.

(5) There is evidence of need for the development and maintenance of a strong, systematic program of R & D under the State Board of Education to

a) identify and evaluate successful programs in local schools and disseminate information about these programs to other systems across the state.

b) assist local units in planning, monitoring, evaluating innovative programs, regardless of the source of funding.

c) provide expanded testing and evaluation services to local schools across the state to the end that local and statewide data collected are more effectively used.

d) make better use of statewide assessment data at both state and local levels.

After careful review of its findings regarding the continuing need for R & D activities in the public schools of North Carolina and with due consideration to the economic constraints facing the Legislature, the Commission makes the following recommendations:

(1) All positions currently operating under the Assistant Superintendent for research, development, evaluation, and assessment should be restored for the second year of the current biennium.

(2) In the event funds are not available to maintain the current positions and related services for research, development, evaluation and assessment, the State Superintendent should be authorized to make maximum use of available resources within the total budget of the Department of Public Instruction to maintain, on a priority basis, any of the current positions and related research, development, evaluation and assessment services deemed essential to improving public education in North Carolina.

(3) Appoint a Research and Assessment Advisory Commission.

<u>Membership</u>

There shall be twelve members with six appointed by the President of the Senate and six appointed by the Speaker of the House. Six members shall be individuals who are not employed

in the field of education. The remaining six shall be employed in public or non-public education at representative levels. The members should be appointed for a minimum of three years on a staggered term basis.

Members appointed to the Advisory Committee should have expertise in one or more of the following categories:

a) Professional experience and formal training in either industrial, social or educational research.

b) Experience and training in statistics and information systems.

c) Experience and training in evaluation and assessment.

d) Experience and training in elementary and/or secondary educational development.

Operating Funds For The Commission

Funds for the operation of the Commission shall be provided by special Legislative appropriation. The Commission shall appoint its own executive secretary, who shall have his own secretary. Members should be reimbursed for travel and subsistence according to standard state procedure. The total annual budget for the Commission, including salary of the executive secretary and his secretary, shall not exceed $50,000.

Responsibilities

a) Assist and advise the Division of R & D in development of goals, objectives and procedures for research, development, assessment and evaluation.

b) Recommend legislation, policy, and guidelines for improving research, development, evaluation and assessment activities at the state and local levels.

c) Advise the R & D staff on technical aspects of research, evaluation and assessment.

d) Recommend individuals or groups to conduct external audits of R & D activities.

Authority

The Commission shall act in an advisory capacity only and shall have no authority to require the Department to take any action or to follow their recommendations. The Commission will, however, make an annual report to the State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Advisory Budget Committee and the Legislature concerning:

a) The quality of research projects for which state funds are expended.

b) Their conclusions and observations with respect to state assessment.

c) Quality and effectiveness of development programs being conducted within the State Department for their jurisdiction.

d) Recommendations for legislation or funding within the general area of research, development, assessment and evaluation.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 1975
RATIFIED BILL

CHAPTER 875

SENATE BILL 45

AN ACT TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT OPERATIONS OF STATE DEPARTMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, AND AGENCIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

* * * * * *

Sec. 59. There is herein appropriated to the General Assembly ten thousand dollars ($10,000) in 1975-76 to support a special study commission which is to make a detailed examination of the programs of research, development, evaluation, and assessment within the Department of Public Instruction and do such other studies as the commission might determine to be pertinent in evaluating these programs in order to determine the effectiveness of said programs and whether they should be transferred, in whole or in part, expanded or decreased.

This study commission shall consist of one co-chairperson and six other members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, four of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives and three members of the public at large; one co-chairperson and six other members to be appointed by the President of the Senate, four of whom shall be members of the Senate and three members of the public at large. Appointments to this study commission are to be made by August 15, 1975, and upon their appointment the co-chairpersons shall organize and begin work as they deem appropriate. This commission shall report to the General Assembly at the convening of its 1976 session.

* * * * * *

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION STUDY COMMISSION

Rep. E. Graham Bell (S)
Box 1292
Gastonia 28052 (704-867-5369)

Rep. George Preston Cullipher (S)
102 Christina Avenue
Williamston 27892 (919-792-5078)

Rep. Thomas B. Hunter (Co-Chairman) (S)
Franklin Street
Rockingham 28379 (919-895-9052)

Rep. Mary C. Nesbitt (S)
471 Fairview Road
Asheville 28800 (702-274-3354)

Sen. Ralph Scott (Co-Chairman) (P)
P. O. Box 909
Burlington 27254 (919-226-6394)

Sen. D. Livingstone Stallings (P)
608 Broad Street
Box 1638
New Bern 28560 (919-633-3111)

Sen. Vernon E. White (P)
P. O. Box 41
Winterville 28590 (919-756-2920)

Sen. John Wesley Winters, Sr. (P)
507 E. Martin Street
Raleigh 27600 (919-828-5786)

Mr. Ernest V. Logemann (Teaches at Atkins High School - 727-2781 -- he can be reached after 2:30 p.m.)
Res.1321 W. First Street
Winston-Salem 27100 (Res. 727-0840) ((P)

Dr. Jerry Paschal, Superintendent (S)
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Whiteville

Mr. W. Clyde Pressley, Superintendent (P)
Eden City Schools
Eden (919-623-2872 or 8408)

Mr. Howard Manning (S)
2100 Banbury Road
Raleigh

Mr. W. J. Smith (P)
4300 Six Forks Road - Cameron Brown
Raleigh (919-782-3911--Lives in Charlotte; works in Raleigh)

Mr. Dean Westmoreland (S)
P. O. Box 215
Grover

APPOINTING AUTHORITY -

(P): President of the Senate
(S): Speaker of the House

STUDY
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REPORTS

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MINORITY REPORT OF THE STUDY COMMISSION

on

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

The Study Commission was organized pursuant to Section 59 of Chapter 875, 1975 Session Laws of North Carolina "to make a detailed examination of the programs of research, development, evaluation and assessment within the Department of Public Instruction and do such other studies as the Commission might determine to be pertinent in evaluating these programs in order to determine the effectiveness of said programs and whether they should be transferred, in whole or in part, expanded or decreased." (emphasis added)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Commission members held meetings at which the Research and Development Staff of the State Department, hereinafter referred to as R & D, presented a slide presentation of its functions. Presentations were made by the Deans of Education of North Carolina State University, The University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina - Greensboro, North Carolina Central University, Duke University and a retired Dean of East Carolina University. Other presentations were made by superintendents, principals, teachers, and by statistical personnel from the Research Triangle Institute. Typical programs were explained, and in general, the purposes, methods of operation and results of R & D's efforts were discussed. Representatives of the State Department appeared again to answer questions.

PROBLEMS OF EVALUATION

The Commission found that in order to properly evaluate the operations of R & D and the effectiveness of its programs on education in North Carolina, it was necessary to first have a general understanding of the relationship between the State Department of Public Instruction and the local administrative school units.

North Carolina operates, for all practical purposes, 147 locally administered, autonomous educational programs. Each separate local school district sets its own standards of excellence in its instruction and goals. The State Department's input is advisory and consists primarily of a list of approved text books, advice from visiting program personnel, and advice from the State staff when called upon by local school district personnel. There are no compulsory standards of excellence of instruction imposed by the State Department on the local systems. The existence of this system raises serious questions as to why there should exist a large staff in the State Department of Education and whether such a department can be effective. However, this Commission's responsibility is to concern itself with one section of the State Department, to wit: R & D, and it is not appropriate to delve further into the overall functions of the entire State Department.

The Commission concludes that the system of autonomous local school districts and a State Department whose role is principally advisory does vitally affect the necessity for and the effectiveness of R & D.

EVALUATION OF R & D

It is necessary in any evaluation of R & D to determine what part of its program is related to local districts and what part is related to the State Department.

R & D AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Commission finds that there is a great need for Research and Development to aid teachers and local school districts in locating new methods of instruction, improving existing methods of instruction, evaluating such new methods, and adapting such evaluated new methods to classrooms in North Carolina. R & D can locate, assess and evaluate new programs as well as existing programs of instruction in North Carolina.

The Commission finds that prior to the organization of R & D in 1969, the State Department had done little in this area, but that programs of assessment and evaluation were carried on to varying degrees within each separate local school district and are still being carried on by local units. The State Department to this date has not put into effect any program to accumulate, assess and evaluate the existence, scope and effectiveness of these separate local assessment and evaluation programs. The State Department has not developed standard test packages from existing commercial material for use in local school districts to the end that some standard form of measuring the minimal achievement of the separate educational programs could be made effective. R & D advises that it is possible to develop such tests and to evaluate the results, taking into consideration the many distinguishing factors between school district makeups, i.e., economic, sociological, etc. R & D has already divided the state into three divisions, i.e.: Mountains, Piedmont and Coastal Plains, and is able now to compare educational levels between these divisions. This demonstrates that testing and comparisons between units and areas are possible. R & D and the State Department are cognizant of the disparities between the educational programs offered by the various local units. This information has not been brought to the

attention of the people of the State so that local boards and citizens have not had access to sufficient data to request improvement of their schools. It would appear that for political or other reasons, certainly reasons not related to quality education of all children in North Carolina, the State Department and R & D have and are still adopting a hands off attitude with regard to this situation.

The existence of separate local systems with no state wide standardized type of locally administered program of assessment and evaluation may be a material contributing factor to North Carolina's children having average reading and math scores approximately eight months behind the national average.

The Commission deplores this situation in North Carolina education, for whatever reason may be given for its cause, and strongly feels that the children of North Carolina are capable of attaining national averages or better and that our school systems should be required to improve the quality of instructional programs to effect this result.

To illustrate the types of programs currently being carried on in North Carolina, the members of the Commission were told of programs in Burlington and Wilson.

R & D has, through its use of Federal and State Funds, approved programs submitted by local units. The Burlington City Elementary School reading program is one of these programs approved by the State Department. In this program, by the expenditure of some $290,000 in three years, the reading level was advanced in the first three grades in seven elementary schools to approximately the national average from eight months behind the national average. This program was adapted to the Chocowinity Elementary School in Beaufort County for one year at a cost of $15,000. Some question has been raised by the Commission as to the cost per school of this program and this question un-

answered, remains. The Commission has also raised the question of the practicality of such programs involving such an expenditure for all elementary schools in North Carolina in face of the current lack of available resources.

Another program of instruction was conducted in eight elementary schools in the Wilson City Schools for two years to this date with a cost of $10,000 per year. This program seems to have accomplished the same results in reading as the Burlington project and an additional improvement in arithmetic at the low cost indicated. This program was followed but not materially participated in by R & D. It has become generally known throughout parts of the State without the investigation, sanction and approval of R & D as was the case of Burlington Schools.

The Commission finds that the primary direction of the efforts of R & D should be to provide assistance to the local units in furnishing standardized types of:

1. Assessment and evaluation tests and techniques.

2. Diagnostic tests to locate and help teachers to improve individual deficiencies in pupil education.

3. Means for the location, assessment and evaluation of useful programs from units within and without the State for the purpose of disseminating the package form to local units.

4. Means for the compilation of local assessment and evaluation results in order to arrive at a level of achievement for each local unit and for establishing state wide minimum achievement goals.

5. And to submit to State Board of Education certain minimum achievement levels to be adopted as recommended goals for all children in each separate local district.

Without the foregoing efforts, the necessity for the continuation of R & D in this area is doubtful, and the continuation of the present level of appropriation of R & D without a commitment to change its direction is not recommended.

R & D AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The relationship of R & D to the State Department of Education is also a part of this Commission's investigation. The Commission recognizes the need of management to know of the effectiveness of the programs under its operations. This need is not as material here as in the ordinary situation since the State Department manages only itself and its regional centers. However, properly conducted and used, R & D can furnish to the State Department information upon which the State Department can more intelligently advise the local school districts, assist in removing the disparity in the quality and differences in standard of education between systems, and also assist in removing the disparity in the quality of education offered to the children of North Carolina as compared to that offered to the children of the Nation as a whole.

Up to this point in time, the North Carolina Department of Education and R & D in particular, have not made on a district by district basis any material investigation into the existence or lack of existence of standards of education in North Carolina, the reasons for such conditions, and more important, have not established programs for corrective action and insisted on the adoption of such programs. R & D, being a relatively new program, should not assume full responsibility for this lack of performance. However, no report has been made to this Commission that would indicate that R & D had been directed by the State Department or on its own initiative or was planning to work in this area to try to correct the deficiency.

R & D has reported to the Commission certain programs designed for selective "representative" groups of children in the 3rd, 6th and 9th grades. The results of these tests tend to show that while North Carolina children

are achieving an average education as many as eight months behind the national average, but that some improvement has been experienced. The Commission is advised that there are no data available to determine whether North Carolina children are advancing at a rate faster, equal to, or slower than that of other children in the Nation. It is known that generally each ten years the norms are changed to reflect changes in average student achievement. Therefore, the Commission has no way to evaluate whether there has been any real improvement in the quality of education of North Carolina children.

This testing and the results are made for the State Department and are generally ineffective for use by local school units. They are best described by the comparison of testing the temperature of water at a given time each year since the results are like reading the "temperature" of education of children at a given time. The most effective program of assessment and evaluation is that being conducted by the local units. Neither the R & D section nor the State Department appear to have attempted to relate the results of the state wide assessment programs to local units. R & D has advised that by an expansion of the existing state testing system it could be adapted to local school units. The Commission does not feel that the results of the existing program as it is now conducted warrant the expenditure of funds required, but if the program were to be expanded to include identifiable local units, then the expenditure might be worthwhile. A further study of the intervals between such testing programs and whether they could best be accomplished by contracting the work should be explored before final commitment to this program is made.

The Commission finds further that there is a decided weakness in the lines of communications between the State Department and local units as

it pertains to the area of R & D. The Commission believes that with more effective direction, utilizing more effectively the personnel of the Regional Service Centers as well as those of the State Department, there can be, without additional cost, but with improved planning, much improvement in the collection and dissemination of information.

The Commission has received information that R & D has not been asked to and has not evaluated the "open classroom" concept and takes note of the fact that this new concept is being spread throughout North Carolina Schools without a study which the Commission considers essential.

The Commission acknowledged at the beginning of the report the necessity for a research and development section. If the R & D section is unable to correct its deficiencies in management and make a substantial change in direction, the Commission has serious doubts as to the utility of its continuance.

The Commission recommends that the research and development of the State Department be directed in two areas with the primary direction on the local units, and the secondary direction being on the State Department.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Local Schools. The Commission recommends that R & D continue only if it adopts the following objectives in connection with its aid to local schools:

1. Conduct an immediate search for teaching techniques and basic teaching programs to improve the reading and mathematic skills of all children in every North Carolina school to the end that our children shall read and perform in the skills of math at a level equal to or in excess of the national average.

2. Prepare a system or systems of achievement testing and diagnostic testing to enable local units to determine their weaknesses and to take corrective action. The system of achievement testing and diagnostic testing should serve a clear purpose - first to assist the local unit to improve its instruction and advance its students' achievements, and second, to be of such

a standard type that the local unit can, with the aid of R & D, determine whether the advancement of its students is keeping pace with other units within the State.

3. Develop a program for drawing on the resources of (a) the Nation, (b) the Departments of Education of the Universities of the State, (c) the local units in order to secure improved programs, determine the validity of such programs, aid in their adaption to local units and assess the results. Caution should be observed to avoid expensive "show case" programs that are not economically feasible for use throughout the North Carolina system.

4. Develop an effective system to make the programs developed under paragraph 3 available to the principals and teachers of local units for their use in upgrading the instruction of their students. The regional centers should be equipped with the best leaders available for such a program. The use of regional centers for political purposes should be avoided.

II. Advisory Committee. The Commission also recommends the appointment of a technical committee of outstanding people from our universities, the Research Triangle Institute, State Department of Education, superintendents, and teachers whose sole charge shall be to determine and recommend to the local units programs suitable to units for improving excellence in education - such responsibility to cease only after North Carolina children have equalled or exceeded national norms. This committee shall be appointed by and responsible to the legislature and shall report its progress annually. The legislature shall from time to time take such action as it shall deem necessary to insure the continued improvement in the quality of education of North Carolina.

III. State Department. The Commission recommends for R & D the following in the area of the State Department:

1. The present system of statewide assessment should be immediately changed to permit its results to be of some use to local units. This may be done as directed by R & D with the concurrence of the suggested committee, if the same is organized. Further statewide assessment of the limited type currently used should be discontinued as not adequately justifying its cost.

2. The Commission recommends that an examination of the statewide assessment be made to determine the reasonable frequency of such costs and whether such testing should be handled by the State's R & D or by independent agencies. The Commission has serious doubts as to the value of the statewide assessment program as it is now constituted since its results cannot be used effectively by local units to determine the validity of their educational programs. The State Department can only compare the results to a fixed norm and is unable to determine whether North Carolina's students are in fact advancing relative to other students in the Nation. The existing program has serious deficiencies.

3. R & D also has other problems. There exists a ten year backlog of research information at the Advancement School which has not yet been effectively evaluated and disseminated. There have been "ad hoc" contracts let without proper research as to need or evaluation of results.

IV. Budget Adjustments. In light of North Carolina's econonomic situation and the questions raised by the Study Commission regarding several needed modifications in the State Agency's Research and Development area, the Commission feels it necessary and reasonable to recommend that additional funds not be appropriated to the area. Further, it recommends that a portion of the funds already appropriated to the area for FY 1976-77 be re-categorized to support some program modifications under the auspices of an Advisory Committee.

The Commission finds that even with the scheduled appropriations, which represent a reduction in funds from the previous year, the State Agency will not be deprived of essential management services. It will still have management information with statistical and computer services (MIS), and Educational Information Center, Occupational Research Services, a Division of Planning, Administrative Services Area, some State Administration and Leadership for Research and Development services, and input from federally-funded positions in state-level administration of federal programs.

The Commission recommends the following aspects be preserved as they now stand in the FY 1976-77 budget:

$ 235,000	local testing funds (flow through) 18069-3
$ 160,149	regional center Research & Evaluation Personnel 18069-4
$ 395,149	

The Commission recommends the following funds be allocated from the FY 1976-77 budget but that the programs they support be modified:

Current Programs

$ 123,752	(State Administration & Leadership for R & D)
$ 89,207	(Kindergarten evaluation)
$ 212,959	

The Commission feels that these funds ($212,959) should be used to support at least the following activities:

Advisory Committees	$ 60,000	
Education Information Center (under Research)	50,000	18021-40
Information/Adaptation/Dissemination program implementation	102,959	
	$ 212,959	

In addition, the Commission feels that the Advisory Committee should make input into all the above programs, focusing particularly on public policy questions such as a change of statewide assessment strategies and the development of an Information/Adaption/Dissemination network.

The Commission is of the opinion that if more funds are available, they should be considered for the expansion of the following: Development's Adaption program, Information/Dissemination network, local testing, regional centers research and evaluation efforts, Management Information System.

The undersigned join in the filing of this Report as a minority report.

April 1, 1976.

Howard E. Manning

MANNING, FULTON & SKINNER
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
WACHOVIA BANK BUILDING

HOWARD E. MANNING
CHARLES L. FULTON
WILLIAM P. SKINNER, JR.
M. MARSHALL HAPPER III
JOHN B. McMILLAN
THOMAS C. WORTH, JR.
W. GERALD THORNTON
HOWARD E. MANNING, JR.

JAMES E. DAVIS, JR.
LAWRENCE W. HILL, JR.
DAN JOHNSON McLAMB

P. O. BOX 1150
ZIP CODE 27602

TELEPHONES: 828-8295
828-8273
AREA CODE 919

April 8, 1976

Senator Ralph H. Scott
Representative Thomas B. Hunter
Co-Chairmen
Legislative Research Commission
State Legislative Building
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

Re: Minority Report of the Study Commission

Gentlemen:

Enclosed herewith you will find the Minority Report of the Study Commission which has been approved and signed by five members of the Committee.

Representative Cullipher signed the original report but has not sent in his approval of the corrections in the report. I assume this approval will be forthcoming in the near future. Representative Graham Bell has advised me that he has read and approved the report and will send in his written approval.

With the best of personal wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

Howard E. Manning

Howard E. Manning

HEM/j
Enclosure

P. S. Since dictating the above, Representative Cullipher's approval has been received and is attached.

HEM

I approve and concur in the Minority Report prepared by Howard E. Manning for filing with the Commission's Report.

Thomas B. Hunter

Thomas B. Hunter

I approve and concur in the Minority Report prepared by Howard E. Manning for filing with the Commission's Report.

Ernest V. Logemann

Ernest V. Logemann

I approve and concur in the Minority Report prepared by Howard E. Manning for filing with the Commission's Report.

Mary C. Nesbitt

I approve and concur in the Minority Report prepared by Howard E. Manning for filing with the Commission's Report.

Dean B. Westmoreland

Dean Westmoreland

I approve and concur in the Minority Report prepared by Howard E. Manning for filing with the Commission's Report.

E. Graham Bell

Staff note: Representative Bell was not present at the April 1, 1976, commission meeting when the formal Commission Report was adopted by a seven to six vote. The status of the formal Commission Report was not changed when Representative Bell signed the Minority Report after the Commission meeting and became the seventh member to endorse the position that was in the minority at the meeting.

I approve and concur in the Minority Report prepared by Howard E. Manning for filing with the Commission's Report. With regard to the Advisory Commission, I am not in accord with the creation of an Advisory Commission

George P. Cullipher

George P. Cullipher

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1975

RATIFIED BILL

CHAPTER 875

SENATE BILL 45

AN ACT TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT OPERATIONS OF STATE DEPARTMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, AND AGENCIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

* * * * * *

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MEMBERS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION STUDY COMMISSION

Rep. E. Graham Bell (S)
Box 1292
Gastonia 28052 (704-867-5369)

Rep. George Preston Cullipher (S)
102 Christina Avenue
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4300 Six Forks Road - Cameron Brown
Raleigh (919-782-3911--Lives in Charlotte; works in Raleigh)

Mr. Dean Westmoreland (S)
P. O. Box 215
Grover

APPOINTING AUTHORITY -

(P): President of the Senate
(S): Speaker of the House